

ATTACHMENT 4.21

INQUIRY RESPONSE PROTOCOL | SUICIDE / PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE

Office staff should utilize this protocol to ensure they respond appropriately to phone calls and other inquiries received in the early stages of the crisis. In this case, “the crisis” refers to a staff or student suicide-death **and** the family has given the school permission to disclose cause of death.

Office staff should be sure to remove the deceased student from school lists that generate automatic correspondence with families and advise staff not to mark the deceased student absent.

Informational Script for Parents: This script is intended to be used by office staff when parents are calling to ask for clarification about whether the information that they have been given is true.

Today all students were informed that a student/staff member, [insert name of deceased], has died by suicide. This is the only verified information we have. Crisis counselors and school staff are working to support students individually and in groups. If you'd like to remove your child from school today, you are welcome to do so. We are encouraging students not to be alone right now to minimize risk and increase safety and support. If you haven't already, you will receive correspondence that includes resources and information about the school's plan to support students ongoing. If you need immediate assistance, please call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This resource can be utilized for any mental health crisis.

Follow the guidelines below to navigate inquiries from various people.

- **Calls unrelated to the crisis:** Take messages to keep short.
- **Police or other security professionals:** Refer to Principal or Assistant Principal.

- **Family members of the deceased:** Refer to Principal (interrupt anything; prioritize these calls).
- **Other school administrators:** Give out basic (permitted) information about the death and crisis response plan; Offer to transfer to Assistant Principal.
- **Parents regarding their child's immediate safety:** Read informational script above; Transfer to SMHT member if necessary.
- **Persons who call with information about students who are struggling:** Take down detailed information – social media posts, names of students, verbatim statements, etc. – and get it to a SMHT member immediately; Take a phone number where the person can be called back if more information is needed.
- **Media:** Release no information; Refer to District Office.
- **Where to send parents who arrive at the school unannounced:** Designate a space for parents to wait and get information. Provide those parents with tips for supporting their child and inform them of the school's plans to continue support. Any person removing a student from school must be approved by parent/guardian in your school's student information system. Records must be kept of who removed the student and when.
- **Parents generally wanting to know how to respond:** Read informational script, relay resources that parents can utilize; Take messages for SMHT members if parents want further information.

Resource list to include:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (call or text)
- HeadQuarters Kansas: (785) 841-2345
- *Attachment 4.24* of this Toolkit